

## Outlaw Troop at work

At Checkpoint 18, 2SCR ensures security and partnership with the ANA

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## Exploring your backyard

Grafenwoehr offers 650 years of history, culture and fun.

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## Hanging loose in Ischgl

An Austrian ski town provides fantastic skiing and concerts.

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# Bavarian News

Vol. 7, Nr. 4

U.S. Army Garrisons Grafenwoehr, Hohenfels, Ansbach, Schweinfurt and Garmisch

March 2, 2011

## Going the extra mile

*Unit delivers on a promise a fallen Soldier made to his children*

Story and photo by

**Mark Iacampo**

*USAG Hohenfels Public Affairs*

HOHENFELS, Germany — On Job Shadow Day, many Hohenfels children accompany their parents to work for an up-close look at what their jobs entail. But for Justin and Jennifer Arizmendez, whose father Staff Sgt. Marc A. Arizmendez was killed in action last July, that didn't seem to be an option this year.

Barbara Arizmendez said that last year the elementary school provided a trip to the training area for children whose parents were deployed.

"My husband told the kids, next year I'm going to take you," she said.

"Barbara found out that her son wanted to go to the motor pool and learn what his father does, and she told him to wait till Job Shadow day," said Lt. Col. Rafael A. Paredes, 1st Battalion, 4th Infantry Regiment, commander. "When I heard about that, I said we can just do it now."

In conjunction with presenting the Arizmendez family with their Soldier's posthumous Meritorious Service Medal, Paredes brought the children out to the motor pool to see firsthand where their father worked.

"You should be proud of your father," Paredes told the children. "He was a great man. Due to his work ethic and his leadership he was able to touch a lot of people.



Justin and Jennifer Arizmendez prepare for their M88 ride.

He left an indelible mark and because of that we're going to present him with this medal."

"We submitted this award back in May or June, as an end of tour award," said Capt. William R. Duncan, Arizmendez's former company commander.

When Arizmendez died, his award was immediately upgraded to a Bronze Star, but Duncan felt there was some confusion as to whether that award was for the incident that took his life or for the tour award.

"We determined there was no reason not to submit the tour award as well," Duncan said. "He did such great service for us during the deployment. I had a bunch of good mechanics, but I

didn't have any better than Marc Arizmendez. We just wanted to be sure we followed that one all the way through, because he earned it."

After the brief award ceremony, Paredes brought the family out to the motor pool. As they reminisced and laughed about past times with Arizmendez, the children commented on a deep rumble growing steadily in the distance.

"She's on," Paredes said.

"She" turned out to be an M88 armored recovery vehicle, but not just any M88.

"That particular machine was his (Arizmendez's) when he first arrived back in 2009," said Master Sgt. Lance W. Howard, 1-4th

maintenance supervisor. "He loved the M88."

Justin and Jennifer clambered aboard and strapped on Kevlars. Their heads and hands popped out of the hatches as the M88 lumbered across the asphalt.

"They'd seen it in the bay before," Barbara said of the massive vehicle, "but they've never heard it on, and they've certainly never rode in it."

"They ain't going to be able to sleep for a week," laughed Command Sgt. Maj. Seann P. O'Brien as the beaming children climbed from the vehicle.

"That was way past cool," Justin said.

Jennifer said she had wanted to ride in the M88 since the first time she'd seen one.

"I couldn't drive, though," she said. "I'm too short."

Barbara said she was very touched by all the support she's been shown by the entire Hohenfels community.

"They are still very much a part of the 1-4 family," Paredes said.

As the trip came to a close, Barbara watched with tear filled eyes as Justin ran ahead, clutching his father's medal to his chest.

"He's always saying, 'I want to be just like daddy when I grow up,'" she said. "It hurts on one side hearing it, but I know I won't stop him if he will join the Army. I'll support him just like I supported Marc."

## Soldier wins GEICO award

by Mark Iacampo

*USAG Hohenfels Public Affairs*

HOHENFELS, Germany — A Hohenfels Soldier has been chosen as the Army's 2010 recipient of the GEICO Military Service Award.

Cpl. Timothy M. Wells, a military police desk sergeant and DARE officer with U.S. Army Garrison Headquarters Detachment, will be honored at a special awards ceremony in Washington, D.C., this April.

"I'm very grateful that I get to represent the Hohenfels community and receive this honor, showing that we not only put as much time and

See GEICO, page 16



## ACS undergoes transformation

by Victor Spong

*Army Community Service*

SAN ANTONIO — Army Community Service is enhancing the way it delivers services, to make it easier and faster for Soldiers and their family members to get the help they are seeking.

The initiative to transform ACS stems from a holistic review of Army Family programs by the Office of the Assistant Chief of Staff of Installation Management. OACSIM is responsible for the execution of the Army Family Covenant, which promises to provide Soldiers and families a quality of life that is commensurate with the quality of their service.

Through focus groups and surveys, Soldiers and family members reported they have both too much and too little information on available services, which makes it difficult for them to determine which service best meets their needs.

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### Packing smart

Travellers who stock up on the necessary vaccines can avoid bringing home any unwanted "gifts" from other countries.

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### Reconciliation

Avoiding a costly surprise when the year-end utility bill is due doesn't have to be complicated.

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## S'furt Soldiers moonlight as Gunnerz

by Eva Bergmann

*USAG Schweinfurt Public Affairs*

SCHWEINFURT, Germany — By day, Sgt. 1st Class Jermaine Grandison, Staff Sgt. Brett Thomas and Sgt. Anthony Bynum are attached to the 44th Expeditionary Signal Battalion here, but once retreat plays they take off their greens and don superhero outfits — their basketball jerseys.

The NCOs play for "The Gunnerz," the DJK Schweinfurt basketball team that plays in the German 2nd regional league. Currently in second place, they're within striking distance of the league title and coach Klaus Ludwig credits the USAG Schweinfurt Soldiers as an important pillar of the team's success.

"We were very lucky to have our American boys," Ludwig said. But he's also aware of difficulties. "It's not always easy to plan with Soldiers. They have other obligations, are sometimes absent on a

short notice, but without them we wouldn't be where we are now, in second place, which is completely sensational."

The sensation is all the more impressive considering the league structure. German sports leagues are organized in a hierarchy. The best teams qualify for advancing to the next league; teams with the lowest points descend to a lower league. Winning is not a matter of success but of survival.

For the Gunnerz, who advanced to their current league in 2008 and who have never played higher, ranking second place could mean a ticket to the top. Ludwig said that the individual strengths of his American players make the whole team "baerenstark," meaning as strong as a bear.

Bynum stands out particularly. His reliable scoring and ability to produce unexpected and spectacular baskets has brought him the respect and attention of the fans as

See GUNNERZ, page 16



Sgt. Anthony Bynum moves in for the kill. Bynum, Staff Sgt. Brett Thomas and Sgt. 1st Class Jermaine Grandison play for the DJK Schweinfurt Gunnerz. Photo by Muel-ler, Mediengruppe Main-Post GmbH

## OHA Survey runs in March

by U.S. Army Europe Public Affairs

*News Release*

HEIDELBERG, Germany — The annual Overseas Housing Allowance (OHA) Utilities Expense Survey for Germany will be conducted from March 1-31. The survey is intended for all military personnel who reside off-post in privately leased or rental housing. Beginning March 1, the Web address to the online survey will be available on the USAREUR home page under "Hot Topics." Additionally, service members will receive an e-mail notification from the Defense Travel Management Office (DTMO) with the direct link to the survey.

The target population for this survey is all service members currently in privately leased housing under the OHA program and who have been in-country (Germany) for six or more months. Homeowners should not take this survey as their expense data is historically

See SURVEY, page 16





## Bavarian News

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Water Tower art by Dane Gray

## Commander's Message



# Community has much to celebrate

Gruess Gott! Fasching parades in our local communities celebrate the battle of supernatural powers in spring to overcome winter's demons.

Now that spring is upon us, don't miss your chance to enjoy the rich traditions of our host nation neighbors. In addition to the sunshine, we have many reasons to celebrate in our community this month.

### National Test Center opening

The Vilseck Education Center will mark the grand opening of the University of Maryland's National Testing Center with a ribbon cutting event, March 10, at 10 a.m. Cake and refreshments will be provided.

The new testing center, which will administer computer-based tests such as the CLEP, DSST and Pearson VUE exams, will allow students to instantly receive results on college-level exams versus 6-8 weeks with the old paper-based format.

For more information, contact Manny Iglesias, education services specialist, at 476-3292 or e-mail [manny.iglesias@eur.army.mil](mailto:manny.iglesias@eur.army.mil).

### Women's History

This month we also celebrate the immense impact women have made not only in world events but also in our own lives. Brig. Gen. Nadja West, commanding general, Europe Regional Medical Command, will be the guest speaker at the Women's History Month celebration breakfast, March 23, from 7:30-9:30 a.m., at the Tower View Room.

Following the breakfast, the group will host Women's Equal Opportunity Workshop, including a question and answer session on women's health topics, professional development and career progression. For more information, contact Karoline Prunhuber at 475-6390.

### Sexual Harassment

Also, in light of Women's History Month, I'd like to remind everyone that



it is the community's responsibility to stop sexual harassment and sexual assault. Bystanders play a significant role in eliminating this issue from our community, and simply standing by and doing nothing has potential to do even more harm in the situation. The Army's Bystander Intervention Training provides Soldiers with the tools to protect their fellow Soldiers and community members. Being aware of your surroundings is the first step. If you see something that looks wrong, say something and take action to stop it.

Community members can report incidents by calling the Sexual Assault Hot Line at 0162-296-0661, and Emergency Services at 09641-83-117. For more information on the Army's Sexual Assault Prevention and Response program, visit [www.sexualassault.army.mil](http://www.sexualassault.army.mil).

### Survivor Outreach Services

The Army community's commitment to taking care of its own runs deep. Survivor Outreach Services focuses on taking care of the children and spouses of Soldiers who died while serving their country. SOS can

help families obtain information on ID cards, answer questions on insurance and finances, and even just provide a listening ear.

If they don't have the answer, they can put families in contact with the organization or person that does.

The group also gets together each month to do build camaraderie and enjoy each other's company. This month, they'll meet at the Vilseck Bowling Center, March 12, from 3-5 p.m.

SOS currently provides assistance to more than a dozen surviving spouses and their children, and 10 retiree widows in the Grafenwoehr-Rose Barracks area. For more information on upcoming events at Main Post and Rose Barracks, contact Patricia Mallard at 476-2650 and [patricia.mallard@eur.army.mil](mailto:patricia.mallard@eur.army.mil).

Thank you again for all you do to make Grafenwoehr the best military community in the Army.

*Col. Vann Smiley  
Commander, U.S. Army  
Garrison Grafenwoehr*

# Soldiers, spouses can prevent problems beforehand

by Jacey Eckhart  
[CINChouse.com](http://CINChouse.com)

When I was getting ready for this deployment, I clicked the online PTSD booklet, "What Families Should Know, What Families Can Do." I thought it was an awesome resource—well-written.

Clear. Reassuring. My husband thought so, too.

"But we don't really need that," he said. "None of that stuff will ever happen to us."

Which is probably true, I think. But I still wanna be ready.

So I noted the dramatic symptoms I've seen on TV and in movies: flashbacks, trouble sleeping, difficulty concentrating, an unwillingness to socialize, inappropriate anger, reliance on drugs and alcohol.

But then I read the more subtle indicators for combat

stress and PTSD and TBI, the ones that weren't so dramatic, weren't so obvious. These sounded more familiar.

I hear from military spouses all the time in person and online about service members who return from deployment and just don't want to talk. Act angry all the time. Have no interest in their marriage or spending time with their spouses. Get easily annoyed with the kids. I've even heard from spouses who are stunned after the deployment to hear that their service member thinks the relationship is over.

According to the research, those can be signs of combat stress, too. But surely the researchers also recognize that these the signs are also a whole lot like the ol' "he's not that into you." If there isn't a blood test for PTSD or combat stress, how are we families supposed to differentiate

between the physical/psychological consequences of war and the crumbling of the relationship?

Because we spouses are well aware that military relationships do end sometimes. Couples — even long married couples — can develop problems during deployment. But how are we supposed to distinguish between for better or for worse from combat stress? Booklets like "What Families Should Know," "What Families Can Do" are a good place to start.

I've always found Military OneSource is great when I need to connect with a real person. I know lots of people are working on solutions to help our service members and their families handle combat stress, PTSD, TBI.

That is all good. But I want to do something now. Before anything happens. While we

are both whole. Before either of us are debilitated with anger or numbness or depression. So I went ahead and printed out the booklet for Brad. He made a rude noise through his nose.

"But I bet it feels real," I told him. "I bet those guys with combat stress feel like their anger or whatever is legitimate, logical. Like when I would cry at nothing when I was pregnant. Or rage when I was breastfeeding. Those things felt real. What will be the test for us so that we both know something is really wrong?"

Brad didn't say anything then. But later during the game he said that if he didn't want to do any house projects that would be a sign that something was wrong. A few days after that he came home from work and said that if he called me or the kids any names that would be really

wrong for him.

So I had him write those two things down on my print-out of the booklet.

"If I stop doing projects or call people names, I promise I will get help."

"OK?" he said, signing his name.

"OK."

When he left I looked over that book again. I told myself this would never happen to us. I'm just overdramatic. But I wrote underneath his words anyway: I promise I will hold on to who you really are. The real you. The way you are with us. The way you are before you go. And I won't let go of that. I won't let go.

*Editor's Note: The online PTSD booklet, "What Families Should Know, What Families Can Do," is available at [www.rand.org/pubs/corporate\\_pubs/2008/RAND\\_CP535-2008-03.pdf](http://www.rand.org/pubs/corporate_pubs/2008/RAND_CP535-2008-03.pdf).*



Photo by Molly Hayden

## Reading Ranger

**ESCHENBACH, Germany — Amber Butler, a second-grader at Netzaberg Elementary School, chats with guest reader Col. Vann Smiley, commander, U.S. Army Garrison Grafenwoehr, during the "Tell me a Story" event at the school, Feb. 16. Smiley delighted students and family members with his enthusiastic interpretation of the book "Click, Clack - Moo Cows that Type," by Doreen Cronin.**

## Stepping it up for military families

The Department of Defense recently stood up a special website on "Strengthening Our Military Families: Meeting America's Commitment."

The site, which includes information on Veterans' Affairs, improvements for youth programs and service-specific links seeks to draw attention to the integral role families provide in support of our nation and its service members.

Visit the website at [www.defense.gov/home/features/2011/0111\\_initiative](http://www.defense.gov/home/features/2011/0111_initiative).

## Was denkst du?

(What do you think?)



**Spc. Justin Kennedy**  
HHC, 18<sup>th</sup> CSSB

"Do a Euro trip. See all the capitals of all the European countries."



**Staff Sgt. Joel McCullough**  
(and 3-year-old Lily)  
172nd SIB, 2-28th Inf. Regt.

"Visit Garmisch. Go see Neuschwanstein and the Zugspitze. It's beautiful down there."



**Ruben Quelex**  
Family Member

"Go to Spain. It's a beautiful place. I went there with my family. The food's great."



**Pvt.2 Tyrel Spragg**  
5<sup>th</sup> Maintenance Company,  
18<sup>th</sup> CSSB

"(Go) to France where the troops fought and died on Normandy Beach."



**Reginna Wilson**  
Family Member

"Travel. Experience the world. ... Paris is only a 4-5 hour drive or a quick plane ride (from) here. It's great!"



# Grafenwoehr



Photo by Molly Hayden

The Rathaus (town hall) is located in the heart of Grafenwoehr and offers information on the town and its surrounding areas. Look for profiles of other towns in your area in future editions of the *Bavarian News*.

by Molly Hayden  
*Staff Writer*

GRAFENWOEHR, GERMANY — Numerous quaint towns lie in the Bavarian foot-print surrounded by beautiful scenery and culture unlike any other. The local people of this region are proud of their 1,000 year history enriched with traditions still carried on today. From bock beer festival festivals to Fasching parades, folk songs to lederhosen-clad Schuhplattler dancers, Bavaria continues to celebrate its history and culture with all who visit.

### Deep roots

Grafenwoehr, the small farm town located in the region of the Upper Palatinate (Oberpfalz) in eastern Bavaria, is no exception. Grafenwoehr is one of the oldest towns in this area and received its town charter in 1361, (that's 131 years before Columbus discovered America for all you history buffs). Currently, 6,900 citizens live on 216 square kilometers of Grafenwoehr and its incorporated communities of Goessenreuth, Kollermuehle, Josephsthal, Dorfmuend, Hammermuend, Bruckendorfmuend, Huetten, Grub and Moos. The town is largely known for the military training area, which began 100 years ago under the Royal Bavarian Army and continued with the German Wehrmacht. Today, it caters to thousands of American Soldiers and their families.

**Military Museum**

The Oberpfaelzer Kultur und Militaermuseum enlightens the community on Grafenwoehr's military past and offers a concave mirror of history through documentaries and video exemplifying the development of the training facility. Stroll through the displays of uniforms and weapons and study the timeline for a step back in time and historic locations, including

## Exploring your backyard



Photo by Amy Zink

**A woman in a traditional Bavarian dirndl entertains with a local band at a fest in Grafenwoehr.**

Elvis Presley's old haunts when he was stationed here in 1958 and 1960. Through the changing times Grafenwoehr has held fast to its Bavarian roots.

### Preserving traditions

Many traditions are preserved here including year-round parades and celebrations including May Day, an annual folk festival in which townspeople erect a tall wooden pole at the onset of the warmer months, and the social volksmarch, which translates to "people's

march" where participants walk designated paths throughout the town, gaining a more intimate look of their surrounding area.

In the spring, an industry fair showcasing wares of local businesses takes over the town and the summer months bring sunshine and rock-n-roll with the annual outdoor music concert coined "Rock im Stadtpark."

Grafenwoehr Mayor Helmuth Waechter welcomes American families to the area and encourages both new residents and inquisitive visitors to participate in the various clubs and social activities.

"I am certain that you will soon feel at home here and enjoy ... our cosmopolitan and friendly city with its mix of people," said Waechter.

### Great outdoors

Although it's small in size, Grafenwoehr is mighty when it comes to community recreation. The town is outfitted with an outdoor swimming pool, community hall with a three-fold gymnasium and conference rooms, a modern sport and fitness center, an indoor playground and a variety of services, restaurants and shopping amenities.

Additionally, Grafenwoehr offers hiking and bicycling paths with the plush Bavarian landscape as the breathtaking background. Hikers and bikers may share the trail with deer, hares and other wildlife as they saunter down the paved paths or stumble off-road to one of the scattered mountain biking trails.

Culture, history and outdoor adventure beckon the community to experience something new. While life seems busier each day, taking a break and getting away is easy — especially if it's in your own backyard.

Information on the city of Grafenwoehr and its surrounding areas, as well as all activities, recreation opportunities and events offered can be found at [www.grafenwoehr.com](http://www.grafenwoehr.com) and [www.grafenwoehr.de](http://www.grafenwoehr.de).

## Resumix to get the axe by April 30

by IMCOM Europe  
Public Affairs  
*News Release*

HEIDELBERG, Germany — Over the next two years the U.S. Army will transition from one automated recruitment tool to another for advertising vacant civil service positions, accepting applications from job seekers, and evaluating the job seeker's eligibility and qualifications.

In Europe, the transition from Resumix to USA Staffing will be completed by April 30. During the transition period, each job announcement will have instructions to guide job seekers through the application process for the specified recruitment tool.

Users will notice the following differences between USA Staffing and Resumix:

- USA Staffing uses assessments to determine the best qualified candidates instead of Resumix skills.
- Announcements will be available on [www.USAJobs.gov](http://www.USAJobs.gov) and [www.ArmyCivilianService.com](http://www.ArmyCivilianService.com)
- Applicants must apply through USA Jobs-Application Manager, not the Army Resume Builder.
- Applicants must answer assessment questions for each vacancy.
- Applicants can upload supporting documentation, for example DD-214 or SF-50.
- Managers will receive a referral list by logging in to an automated system called Selection Manager instead of receiving a PDF referral list via e-mail.

Army officials recommend that applicants create a resume in both Resumix and USA Jobs-Application Manager. Once their resume is on file in both systems, they can easily apply for jobs from the job announcement.

The job announcement will provide applicants guidance on which system to use to submit their resume.

For more information about the transition go to [www.armycivilian-service.com](http://www.armycivilian-service.com) and [https://cpolrhp.cpol.army.mil/eur/employment/Application\\_Process\[1\].pdf](https://cpolrhp.cpol.army.mil/eur/employment/Application_Process[1].pdf).



## High school students get vocational training at commissary

by Christel Breeze  
*Hohenfels Middle-High School*

HOHENFELS, Germany — Three students in Ms. Taylor's Life Skills class are working in the Hohenfels Commissary produce department for the first time as part of a new vocational training program. Codi Martin, Kristin Stribling and Drew Martin report to the commissary for one period per day, Monday through Thursday. On Friday, they remain at school and complete paperwork, which summarizes the week's activities. The time varies from 30 minutes to an hour and a half depending on the day. Erika Thomas, the produce department manager, gives students many different tasks. On

Mondays, when the commissary is closed, students have learned how the produce department is cleaned from ceiling to floor. Codi and Kristin do not need to be told what to do when it comes to the banana bin. They get right to work to remove the old materials and scrub the bin for fresh bananas. All of the students have become excellent stockers under the direction of Tina Williams. They sort fruits and vegetables on the shelves, remove damaged or spoiled items, and restock each and every item in the produce department. The shelves are what the customers see, but Codi, Kristin and Drew are also active behind the scenes. On Mondays, they help clean and prepare to open on Tuesday.

Each day they may be presented with different tasks, but they have already learned to prepare vegetables for salads, and then make the salads for the Grab and Go section. The salads must be popular, because there is rarely a salad left on the shelf at the end of the day. The three students also enjoy all aspects of the fruit cups: cleaning ingredients, chopping all varieties of fruit, filling the cups, and then pricing and stocking them. Fruit cups prepared in the produce department are also popular items in the Grab and Go section. When asked about their favorite part of working in the produce department, each student had a different answer. Codi likes cutting pineapple into

pieces for the fruit cups and her second choice is cutting kiwi. "I like peeling them," Codi said. Kristin prefers making the salads. She is a master at topping lettuce with carrots, tomatoes, cucumbers and peppers in the correct proportions. Drew says that if he could do anything in the produce department he would "cut pineapple because it smells sweet." His second favorite job is stocking. Drew will move to the deli next semester; but he, Kristin and Codi have gained valuable job skills during the five months in the Hohenfels Commissary produce department. *Editor's Note: Christel Breeze is a paraeducator at Hohenfels Middle-High School.*

### Communicating with your commissary

Commissary customers seeking the fastest resolution to a local commissary concern should contact their local store director via e-mail on the store's website. To access your local commissary page, go to [www.commissaries.com](http://www.commissaries.com), select locations and your commissary. The e-mail address can be found under Store Information or Management. Patrons who have not had success resolving concerns at the local level or who have other nonlocal concerns may contact the Defense Commissary Agency by completing the On-Line Customer Comment Form at [www.commissaries.com/YAL/customer\\_comments.cfm](http://www.commissaries.com/YAL/customer_comments.cfm). Feedback can include comments about your shopping experience, compliments, questions and suggestions. Customers also have the option of completing a hard copy Your Action Line form available in all commissaries, normally located at the store entrance or exit. *Source: IMCOM Europe Public Affairs.*



# Star gospel groups rock Hohenfels

Story and photo by  
**Mark Iacampo**  
*USAG Hohenfels Public Affairs*

HOHENFELS, Germany — Spirits soared as a congregation of award-winning gospel performers kicked off their “Lift Up Your Spirit Tour II” at the Hohenfels Community Activity Center, Feb. 9.

Headlined by James Fortune and FIYA, recipients of the 2009 ASCAP Song of the Year award, the night also included performances by the stellar award winning sisters RiZen, and Grammy nominated Canton Jones. Opening the show was Sgt. Calvin Sneed, fresh from his recent tour with the 2010 U.S. Army Soldier Show. Fortune said the tour’s title really expresses their goal.

“I think a lot of these Soldiers, being over here, they need that encouragement,” he said. “And to really be a part of that is just an honor and a privilege.”

Sneed opened the show with a bang, quickly getting the crowd on their feet and hopping.

“This is my passion,” Sneed said. “I’m a pastor of worship back in my church so I do it Sunday after Sunday, but being able to do it on this platform is amazing.”

Sneed is as big of a fan of his co-stars as the thousands who buy their CDs.



**James Fortune & FIYA harmonize during the Lift Up Your Spirit tour at the Hohenfels Community Activity Center, Feb. 9.**

“They are great vocalists,” he said. “I was listening to their sound-check and I’m just like – Wow! This is such a great opportunity, just being in this atmosphere, touring on the bus with them. It’s amazing.”

Jones started his set by declaring, “There’s no need to be a sad Christian.” He promptly demonstrated the fact by “getting old school” and launching into the stepper’s groove “Love Song,” the hit single from his CD, “Love Jones.”

“I’m so grateful that we had an opportunity to get performers like this here,” said audience member Niakita Booker. “I’m just glad I had

an opportunity to be here, up front.”

Adriann and Aundrea Lewis, the two powerhouse vocalists of RiZen, followed with a high energy performance that literally rocked the walls. Their vivaciousness and passion kept the audience on its feet and dancing throughout the set.

Adriann took a moment onstage to thank the Soldiers.

“You’re the reason that I can go to sleep at night and rest peacefully and not be concerned that anything’s going to happen to me before the next morning,” she said. “It’s an honor just to be asked to come over here and sing for you.”

Fortune and FIYA closed out the night with some songs highlighting their message of hope and salvation, including the chart topping “I Trust You”, the longest running #1 hit single for any genre.

Before launching into the band’s 2004 smash hit “You Survived,” Fortune related a tale of a Soldier who approached him once after a show. The Soldier told him of combat and confessed he’d often considered suicide, but that Fortune’s music and his message had helped him through.

“We appreciate your sacrifice,” Fortune told the crowd. “What you have to give up in order for us to be free.”

“It was a blessing and an honor to have them here, too,” said Sgt. Wanda Ruiz of the Hohenfels Health Clinic. “Wherever they go, they’re going to plant the same bliss as they did here.”

“It was awesome from opening to end,” agreed her husband, Alfonso. “Just like the man said, it’s a Holy Ghost party you can’t stop.”

RiZen’s Aundrea Lewis said the tour provided them the opportunity to let Soldiers know that their service and sacrifice touches people they don’t even know.

“All of us back home in the States really appreciate them,” she said. “Today is a great day when we can speak for our nation on their behalf and tell the Soldiers: Thank you.”

# Ansbach home to new Choppers

by **Ron Toland Jr.**  
*USAG Ansbach Public Affairs*

ANSBACH, Germany — U.S. Army Garrison Ansbach is now home to more than just helicopters. A young local hockey team now calls Ansbach home, too.

In 2008, when Maj. Pete Perzel, 12th Combat Aviation Brigade S-1 officer, arrived at the USAG Ansbach from Heidelberg, he wanted to play hockey.

Loving and playing the sport most of his life, he organized a few pick-up hockey games, playing at local ponds in Ansbach or renting ice rinks in Nuremberg, but there was no team.

But all that changed in September 2010 when he returned from deployment to Iraq, organized a local team and the Ansbach Choppers team was born.

“The whole time I was deployed, I was sort of scheming (about creating a team),” he said.

Having recruited and known some of the other players before deployment, he had a starting point.

“I had a roster, before the deployment in 2009 and we played three-on-three tournaments,” he said.

Perzel said while the team came together easily by word-of-mouth, there was still a lot of work to do. Word of the team spread fast in the community.

“Running into other guys got enough players to build the team ... and that is when we really got organized,” he said.

Perzel, the team captain, said that keeping a team together takes a lot of work.

“You have to be totally focused and devoted on the team,” said Perzel.

But the effort is worth it, as hockey provides physical, psychological and emotional benefits to Perzel and his players.

“For me, it goes in line with a lot of the philosophies in the Army in terms of physical fitness and staying physically fit,” he said. “But in general, being a physically fit person, it helps your mind ... so it’s a win-win. I’m doing something I love and getting a really good workout,” he said. “Hockey totally puts me in awesome shape to easily pass any PT test standard.”

Perzel said hockey sharpens another edge as well.

“It also makes me mentally sharp,” he said. “I feel more mentally sharp in the game and not as sluggish during the day. It is also a PTSD kind of helper; it is a stress release ... from deployment, work, family, your own life, whatever is going on.”

“Hockey is an aggressive sport,” Perzel said. “Hockey players have to come together and play, no matter where they are. It is a sport of small numbers and the team is an outlet for these guys to have a stress release, too, and they love hockey.”

Perzel said it also represents cohesion.

“It is a team sport, so it brings together all ranks,” he said. “We have privates on the team, majors and even DoD civilians,” he said. “It is about bringing these different ranks and Soldiers together and being a team, which is what we do in the Army anyway,” he said. “It’s also about being on the team, being a bunch of brothers together, playing hockey and sticking up for one another,” he said.

Any level of player is accepted, but Perzel said there is a level of expectation.

“The team is not about teaching how to play hockey, it’s about playing hockey; playing games,” he said.

Community members who would like to play hockey for the Choppers or get involved can contact Perzel at DSN 467-2488 or e-mail the team at [ansbachhockey@gmail.com](mailto:ansbachhockey@gmail.com). The team’s website is [www.wix.com/basedog/ansbach-choppers](http://www.wix.com/basedog/ansbach-choppers).

# Community’s faith bolstered at breakfast

Story and photo by  
**Charles Stadlander**  
*USAG Schweinfurt Public Affairs*

SCHWEINFURT, Germany — The coffee poured steaming from urns, the flapjacks were piled high, smiles and warm handshakes spread throughout the room and reverence for God was served in hearty helpings. The National Prayer Breakfast, an annual gathering that mirrors the large gathering in Washington, D.C. every February, convened at the Conn Community Club & Pavilion early, Feb. 10, drawing a diverse crowd of Soldiers, family and civilians totaling over 165 people.

The event was hosted by the Chaplain (Lt. Col.) Dean Bonura and the rest of the USAG Schweinfurt Chapel. Chaplain (Col.) Jim White, stationed in Heidelberg as

the command chaplain for V Corps, was in attendance as a special guest speaker. The mood of the room was festive, patriotic and devotional.

In a prayer he said on behalf of the nation, Chaplain (Capt.) Ronald Webb gave “thanks to God, for the many blessings you’ve bestowed on the United States of America.” The attendees joined in on a prayer for the continued prosperity of the country, and for help in setting “an example that is great, wise and faithful for our descendants to follow.”

Chaplain (Capt.) Mijikai Mason introduced White, a man he’s known for eight years and with whom he’s previously deployed. Mason said White, whose nearly 30 years of service in the chaplaincy have taken him around the globe, is a man who “believes in Soldiers and believes in this nation.”



**Members of several Schweinfurt tenant units bow their heads during a prayer for Soldiers and families at the National Prayer Breakfast, Feb. 10.**

White spoke about relational resiliency, a topic he says is important in a time of national crisis — one that is political, economic and spiritual. “We need to have faith in order to take action,” said White. “Faith is something we do.”

The circle of support White suggests we all remember is what he calls GLO. “God,” “loved ones” and “other” significant people are what will bring us through all of the most difficult times in life.

“Never in the history of the world has there been a

night so dark that God didn’t bring a morning,” said White.

The breakfast also consisted of a prayer for Soldiers and their families, which Chaplain (Lt. Col.) Joanne Martindale delivered. She spoke of keeping their service and sacrifice in our hearts and to remember that, “maybe our time on Earth is not just about us.”

The years of experience among the senior chaplains in the room was contrasted with the dozens of young privates from Schweinfurt’s tenant units. Some Soldiers there had seen service in Vietnam, Iraq, Bosnia or Afghanistan while some were so young as to have been born years after White was first commissioned as a lieutenant.

Faith, reverence and devotion were constants during the event, as well as a love for community, togetherness and a hearty breakfast.

# Works Council reps have an explosive experience

Story and photo by  
**Mark Iacampo**  
*USAG Hohenfels Public Affairs*

HOHENFELS, Germany — The IMCOM level Works Council got a bang out of its recent visit to Hohenfels when the tour included a demonstration at the Improvised Explosive Device Academy, Feb. 16.

The IED academy’s two-pronged approach focuses on defeating the device and attacking the network by allowing Soldiers to get hands-on training as well as IED and situational awareness. The tour gave the visiting council members a brief overview of what that training involves.

“That was really impressive,” said Peter Schmidt, the Kaiserslautern Council representative. “I was really surprised to learn what can happen over there. No one even thinks about things like that. You have to expect everything, and this demonstration really brings the danger itself closer.”

The Works Council represents the interests of the local national workforce under the purview of the German Labor Law, coordinating with the command group and the Civilian Personnel Advisory Office on all matters affecting LN employees.

Council members meet once a month at different locations around the IMCOM footprint, and usually pay a visit to the closest installation, said Christa Meier-Muehlbach, U.S. Army Garrison Hohenfels Work Council chairwoman.

As well as a Hohenfels bus tour, the Works Council members enjoyed hands-on demonstra-

“**Out of those little things, they make bombs, things you don’t even think about.**”

Christa Meier-Muehlbach  
Work Council Chairwoman

tions of several aspects of the IED academy, such as optical equipment, robots, and bomb making materials.

“It really makes you start thinking,” said Meier-Muehlbach. “As a German, you don’t get the chance to go to places like this. But we’re concerned about our soldiers downrange, too, and if you see something like this you realize more what kind of danger they’re in. This really shows you something that you don’t realize when all you see is what’s on TV.”

Robert Weir, IED awareness instructor, said part of the academy’s mission is to help teach Soldiers to identify potential threats. Displays included faux IEDs, some as innocuous as cell phones or rice cookers.

“Sometimes it’s just something that doesn’t look right,” Weir said, holding up a cell phone with wires protruding from the top.

“Out of those little things, they make bombs,



**Works council members examine parts of the Raven B unmanned aerial vehicle while Senior Logistician John Neal describes its function.**

things you don’t even think about,” Meier-Muehlbach said. “If I saw a pot standing somewhere I’d think there was food in there, I’d never think it could be a bomb!”

“The highlight of the tour was the practical demonstration,” said Schmidt. This involved witnessing several small detonations similar to what units experience within the training area to simulate roadside bombs and other IEDs.

“I think this is a really good training tool,” Schmidt said. “It’s really impressive. You never know what you have to expect. And the Soldiers have to face all of those risks. It’s really frightening, really dangerous. It scares me.”



# Outlaw Troop makes progress at Checkpoint 18

by Sgt. 1st Class  
John Wollaston  
*2SCR Public Affairs*

FORWARD OPERATING BASE FRONTENAC, Afghanistan — In a remote, rural province like Uruzgan, even the smallest presence can have a huge impact on the local population.

Checkpoint 18 is one such location. The 2<sup>nd</sup> Stryker Cavalry Regiment routinely sends a platoon to the checkpoint for up to four days at a time. The checkpoint provides security for a paved bridge crossing over the Arghandab River, as well as a section of Route Bear, the vital route connecting Kandahar and Uruzgan provinces.

“In my opinion, if this checkpoint wasn’t here, the insurgents would blow up the bridge,” said 1<sup>st</sup> Lt. Andrew Murphree, 2nd Platoon leader. “Here at Checkpoint 18 our mission is to provide security and a freedom of movement patrol on Route Bear as well as working in partnership with the Afghan National Police.

“The locals enjoy the security the checkpoint provides,” Murphree added. “Not only do we secure the bridge, but we secure the market as well,

which is their only means of commerce, so they appreciate us being here.”

At Checkpoint 18, the mountains to their left and the river behind them aren’t the only things surrounding the Soldiers from 2<sup>nd</sup> Platoon of Outlaw Troop. The insurgents are out there, too. For all the security and relative stability in the area surrounding Checkpoint 18, it’s a dangerous place.

“Right out there behind that mud wall is where they fired from last time we took contact,” said Sgt. Walter Lau Hee, a squad leader with 2<sup>nd</sup> Platoon, who points to a mud wall about 15 feet from the entrance to an orchard just outside the base perimeter. “They used the orchard to cover their advance and the wall for protection when we returned fire.”

The ever-present danger highlights the need for a strong local security presence. The platoon routinely works with the local offices of the Afghan National Police, conducting partnered patrols and training the officers to provide an independent security presence in anticipation of the day when there are no U.S. or coalition forces in the area.

“We have a good relation-

ship (with the ANP),” Murphree said. “I have a lot of respect for the ANP at the northern checkpoint and I look forward to working with them in the future.”

To that end, 2<sup>nd</sup> Platoon, as part of its four-day rotations to Checkpoint 18, visits the ANP checkpoints within its area of operation. During this rotation 2<sup>nd</sup> Platoon takes in the view from the ANP outpost high above the Dahla Dam, a beautiful sight to be sure, but a climb that requires the agility of a mountain goat to get to it. The platoon inspects the progress on new construction at the outpost, necessitated by a fire weeks before. The checkpoint commander is eager to show Murphree the improvements being made.

However, 2<sup>nd</sup> Platoon is focusing its efforts to improve how the ANP conducts itself.

“We’ve conducted more missions and they (local ANP) know how we operate,” Murphree said. “For the future I hope that we can get them to eventually work on their patrolling.”

The time Murphree and his Soldiers have for training this particular group of ANP is growing short. His platoon, along with the rest of the



Spc. Zachary Foor, a medic with 2nd Platoon, Outlaw Troop, 2nd Stryker Cavalry Regiment, passes by some curious children while on patrol outside Checkpoint 18 outside Sha Wali Kot in southern Uruzgan Province, Afghanistan.

squadron, will soon move to another province to complete their yearlong deployment to Afghanistan, leaving the final training of the officers to their replacements.

“This area has changed for the better since we got here,” Murphree says. “I’m excited about the opportunity to move to a new area and continue working with ANSF. We just have to train up and continue to train hard for this next phase of our mission.”



Hawk Company Soldiers begin their search of the rugged terrain near the mountain village of Tulak.

## Air assault mission trains ANA

Story and photo by  
Sgt. Jerry Wilson  
*2SCR Public Affairs*

ZABUL, Afghanistan — While folks back home were still dreaming in their beds, troopers from Hawk Company, 3<sup>rd</sup> Squadron, 2<sup>nd</sup> Stryker Cavalry Regiment, and their Afghan National Army counterparts were preparing for an air assault mission into three remote mountain villages.

The mission targeted the villages of Tulak, Nowbad and Bulaig, all suspected of being areas heavily trafficked by insurgent forces.

It is 4 a.m. as the helicopters touch down in the desolate mountains. Icy winds kick up, increased by the rotor wash from the Chinooks, as the partnered Soldiers swiftly exit the helicopters and wait. As the sun begins to rise, Hawk’s partnered patrols set out to cover the more than five kilometers of unknown terrain. Afghans led the way as each unit began clearing the

compounds. The teams slowly made their way across vast fields that at one time had been cultivated but are now desolate and barren. The purpose of this mission was not only reconnaissance, but also to instruct the Afghan soldiers.

“This was a joint operation with ANA as a part of increasing their training, their skills, abilities and confidence in areas that have never seen a GIRA or coalition presence,” said 1<sup>st</sup> Lt. Karl Stadler, 1st platoon leader from Hawk Company. “The ANA is at the point now where we are no longer training them on basic Soldier skills. We are training their leadership on planning and coordinating, the whole process of what leaders need to know to start conducting their own missions.”

ANA forces were involved in all aspects of the operation from the planning to the execution. ANA intelligence teams interviewed villagers to obtain important information for

future operations.

As teams proceeded through each village, it became clear that most of the dwellings had long been abandoned. From the few remaining villagers that were found, Soldiers were able to ascertain that families began leaving due to the lack of water.

Although only a handful of citizens were found, and no signs of weapons or insurgent occupation were uncovered, the mission was deemed a success. It provided the ANA an opportunity to establish connections and communications in an area where citizens had not seen government or coalition security forces in more than 10 years. Many villagers were happy to see the Soldiers and stopped to shake their hands and talk about problems in the area. Preparing the ANA to perform missions completely free from coalition participation is a stepping stone that brings Afghanistan closer to becoming a stronger, more independent country.

## Spouses treated on Valentine’s Day

by Maj. Robert Hoover  
*2SCR Public Affairs*

VILSECK, Germany — Valentine’s Day is normally a time for pampering our significant others. With the deployment of 2<sup>nd</sup> Stryker Cavalry Regiment, a large number of spouses and friends were away during this special day. So the Vilseck Community Spouse’s Club decided to turn a normal bingo night into a Valentine’s chocolate decadence evening at Vilseck’s historic castle. “Mrs. (Jennifer) Hoover wanted to have a nice Valentine’s event since so many

spouses are deployed and the women would be home without their cupids,” said Christina Vaughn, the VCSC president. “Then she thought if we could really make it special by holding it at a location that was historic, romantic, safe and add dancing and food, and we know so many spouses love to play bingo, so she combined them all.”

The VCSC was hoping to get at least 50 people, but ended up with around 90 people who enjoyed the festivities. The VCSC had a myriad of volunteers to assist with decorating, making prize baskets, signing up

and cleaning.

“Most 2SCR spouses are deployed and not able to spend this special day with their loved one. So as a spouses club, we wanted to provide an event that we could all spend the evening together and remember our spouses downrange,” Vaughn said.

Vaughn said the night ended with dancing, which was one of the many highlights of the evening. Many of the attendees commented on the fabulous venue and event. Vaughn also mentioned that the VCSC has monthly events for spouses and everyone is invited to attend.

## Deployment Snapshots



Photo by 2nd Lt. Michael Chigbrow

LOGAR PROVINCE, Afghanistan — Sgt. 1st Class Otto Valdez, a platoon sergeant with Route Clearance Patrol (RCP) 43, 54th Engineer Battalion, Task Force Dolch, establishes rapport with local villagers during a mission to distribute school supplies and toys to Afghan children in the Baraki Barak valley of Logar Province, Afghanistan, Jan. 30. Valdez’ friends and family continue to donate aid packages to Afghan schools, many of which are just marginally functioning.



Photo by 1st Lt. Michael Johnson

CAMP ARIFJAN, Kuwait — Spcs. Eric Harms and Aaron Morningstar, equipment operators in 1st Platoon, 500th Engineer Company, 15th Engineer Battalion, grade and compact a road. The road has been renovated to prevent major drainage problems incurred during the rainy season. The battalion is currently split between Kuwait and Kabul, Afghanistan, conducting various construction and maintenance operations.



## Signs of ski support



Photo by Erica Hansen

**GARMISCH-PARTENKIRCHEN, Germany — Garmisch Elementary-**

**Middle School students Molly McNicol (left) and Bryanna Cedeno show their support for the U.S. Women's Ski Team during training for the downhill competition at the FIS World Ski Championships. A group of GEMS students and their teachers walked from post to the nearby Kandahar course carrying homemade fan posters and American flags.**



Photo by Kristie Mashburn

**Seeing red**

**ESCHENBACH, Germany — The faculty and staff at Netzaberg Elementary School support the troops every day, but especially on Fridays. To show support for our troops, the staff will wear red shirts every Friday until all the troops come home.**



## Serving up appreciation

**GRAFENWOEHR, Germany — Employees from all three dining facilities at Grafenwoehr and Rose Barracks take a break to break bread with Col. Vann Smiley, commander, U.S. Army Garrison Grafenwoehr, who hosted a dinner at the Tower View Restaurant, Feb. 17, to honor all food service personnel.**

**"It's very simple," Smiley said. "On behalf of the entire community, I just wanted to pull you in ... look you in the eyeball and tell you thank you for everything you do." More than 150 DFAC employees attended the event.**



Photos by Jeremy S. Buddemeier

**Natalya Enfeurt and fellow employees make their way through the heavy hors d'oeuvres line at the DFAC employee appreciation dinner.**

# What's Happening

## Ansbach Briefs

### Tax Center open

The Ansbach Tax Center is now open. Tax preparers are available at Katterbach in Bldg. 5817, 3rd Floor or Stork Barracks in Bldg 6506, 2nd Floor.

Call 467-2324 or 09802-83-2324 for more information or to make an appointment.

### Divorce Basics

March 4: 10-11 a.m. Katterbach Kaserne, Bldg. 5817, 3rd Floor. The Ansbach Law Center is presenting a one hour informational briefing on the basics of separation and divorce in the U.S.

This informative session will cover all aspects of a divorce: jurisdiction, child custody/visitation, child support, alimony, typical fees and costs associated with divorce, and what happens after the divorce.

For more information, call DSN 467-2103, CIV 09802-83-2103.

## Garmisch Briefs

### What'sh appenin'n ow?

For the latest news on fests, concerts, parties, parades and more in Garmisch-Partenkirchen, visit the USAG Garmisch Facebook page: updated daily, always relevant and fresh as a morning brezel. Cost: Free!

### Venice & Verona

March 4-6: See the great art and architecture, pigeons in St. Mark's Square, and gondolas on the Grand Canal.

Enjoy good places to eat! We visit Verona, the Romeo and Juliet city with the great Roman arena. Cost: \$290.

### Ski Austria

March 12: Jump on the Ski Bus Express to Erwald to ski the Austrian side of the Zugspitze, Germany's highest point. Cost: \$69 adult, \$59 child, includes transportation and lift pass, \$79 includes weekend equipment rental, \$12 for just the bus ride (space available).

### Neuschwanstein Castle

March 13: Visit the most popular tourist attraction in Germany. This tour, called "Ludwig and Richard," focuses as much on the famous composer as well as

the shy king. In addition, we visit the Ettal Monastery and the Wieskirche, a UNESCO designated World Heritage Site. Cost: \$39

### Night Sledding

March 15: A completely groomed and lighted ski run just for sleds. Includes transportation, minibob and lift pass. Cost: \$39 adult, \$29 child.

Unless noted, all FMWR events meet at the Pete Burke Center. To register for the events, contact the staff at the Pete Burke Community Center, DSN 440-2638, CIV 08821-750-2638, or e-mail us at Garmisch.FMWRodr@us.army.mil.

### ACS classes/gatherings M.o.M's Cafe

March 4, 11 and 18, 10-11:30 a.m. This support group covers a variety of requested topics such as lactation support, infant and toddler CPR and choking; support for pregnancy loss, breastfeeding and weaning a toddler; creative play for infants and toddlers; or common skin and health conditions in infancy and toddlerhood.

### Newborn Care Class

March 6, 10 a.m.-noon. To provide new parents with practical experience in caring for their newborn: holding, diapering, feeding, burping, bathing, circumcision care to mention a few. Parents will become familiar with normal newborn appearance, the importance of self-care and adjustment to new parenting role.

### AFTB — Level 1

March 10, 9 a.m.-4 p.m. Army Family Team Building is about readiness: mission readiness and family readiness, adapting to Army life, accepting challenges, dealing with change and developing life skills.

Unless noted all ACS activities take place or meet at the Garmisch ACS Center (Artillery Kaserne, Bldg. 203).

For more information contact your ACS staff at DSN 440-3777, CIV 08821-750-3777, or e-mail them at Garmisch.FMWRacs@eur.army.mil.

## Graf/Rose Barracks Briefs

### Health Clinic Fridays

Beginning April 1, the Army health clinics in Bavaria will be open full days on Fridays. As a

result, the clinics will no longer schedule appointments after noon on Thursdays to accommodate staff training time. For more information, contact your local Army health clinic.

### Grizzly Fasching

Come celebrate Fasching, March 8, at 1 p.m. See the Grafenwoehr Elementary School Grizzlies march in their annual Fasching Parade! We've been planning and making costumes for a while now. It is a fun genuine "German experience" at your front door. For more, contact Frau Kean at DSN 475-7133, CIV 009641-83-7133.

### EFMP events

The Exceptional Family Member Program will host two events in March. March 1: EFMP 101, 3-4:30 p.m., Main Post, Bldg. 244, Rm. 219; and March 2: Free bowling for EFMP members, 4-6 p.m., Rose Barracks Bowling Center. Have questions? E-mail usag grafenwoehr.efmp.manager@us.army.mil.

### Guest readers needed

March 2, at 5:45-7 p.m. It's that time of the year again; time to celebrate "Read Across America." In honor of this event, Grafenwoehr Elementary School will be hosting Bedtime Stories and volunteer readers are needed to help make the event a success.

Volunteers will read books to small groups of children that will rotate throughout the school for the hour long event. They may bring their own books or choose from the available. For more, or to sign up, e-mail lisa.heinzmann@eu.dodea.edu.

### Adult Book Club

First Thursday of each month: Next gathering, March 3. Cold winter nights are the perfect time to get together, enjoy a cocktail if you'd like, and discuss books. Meet 7-8 p.m., in the Patton Fireside Lounge, Main Post Bldg. 209. No preregistration required, cash bar available. For more, contact the Main Post Library at DSN 475-1740.

### Calling all crafters

April 9: The Hohenfels Community and Spouses' Club is looking for crafters to sell their handmade goods during an art fair. The event will take place in the Hohenfels Community Activities Center from 10 a.m.-3 p.m. Interested artists may sign up or receive further information by e-mailing PaigelovesKeith@yahoo.com. Deadline to sign up is April 1.

## Hohenfels Briefs

### Speed limit reduced

In order to mitigate risk to our children, pedestrians and gym patrons, the posted speed limit on General Patton Drive has been reduced to 40 kilometers per hour. Also reduced is the speed limit from the intersection of Warrior Way and Patton Drive to 25 meters beyond the pedestrian crosswalk located downhill from "The Zone." Drivers are advised to pay attention to these changes. Traffic enforcement is now in effect.

### AFN Eagle going stereo

As of yesterday, AFN Bavaria the Eagle has moved to 93.5 FM and AFN Powernet is now on AM 1485. This new frequency is U.S. car-friendly, meaning car radios in U.S.-made automobiles can lock into it.

On AFN Bavaria the Eagle listeners will be able to hear live, local radio shows from 6-10 a.m. and from 2-6 p.m.

The rest of the day they'll hear the same mix of music and information on network-wide shows. On AFN Powernet, listeners can hear a mix of news/talk and music programming. For a full list of schedules of The Eagle and Powernet, go to bavaria.af-neurope.net and click on "Schedules" at the top of the page.

### Taming your toddler

March 3: Are you raising a toddler? This second of our six-session series addresses some of the common challenges of parenting the little cave-boy or cave-girl in your household. Come learn how to turn the "terrible" twos into the "terrific" twos and build a more loving and respectful relationship with your child. Child care may be available for registered participants. This installment will cover "Effective & Loving Toddler Discipline Part 1."

This alternating week workshop runs from 9:30-10:30 a.m. at ACS, Bldg. 10. Call Nicole Ceterski or Heather Bruce, New Parent Support Program coordinators, at DSN 466-4073/4323 for more.

### Skiing in Reit im Winkl

March 5: Let ODR do the driving and enjoy a quick winter get-away in the Bavarian Alps. The Winklmoosalm mountain community in Reit im Winkl, Germany, offers Alpine and cross country skiing, hiking and more. Cost is \$25 for adults and \$20 for children ages 12 and younger. Discounts offered for groups of

five or more and for those with season rentals. A three hour beginner instruction class will be offered for \$10.

Bus will depart from Hohenfels ODR, Bldg. H15 at 5:30 a.m. and will return at 8:30 p.m. Cost includes transportation only. Lift tickets can be purchased at the ski hill. Seating is limited. Call to reserve your seat today. Visit the website at <https://webtrac.mwr.army.mil/webtrac/hohenfelsrec-trac.html> to sign up and to pay for the trip. For more, call DSN 466-2060 or CIV 09742-83-2060.

### Upcoming trips

Mark your calendar now for these upcoming ITR and Outdoor Recreation trips. Additional information will be published in upcoming issues of the Hohenfels Hometown Happenings, or call DSN 466-2060 for more.

- March 12: Zurich
- March 19: Airboarding and skiing in Austria.
- March 19: Salzburg
- March 26: Prague

### Volleyball players

Feb. through May: FMWR Sports and Fitness is looking for players to participate on men's and women's community level volleyball teams. Practices will be held every Monday from 5:30-7 p.m.

Stop by the Post Gym or call FMWR Sports and Fitness at DSN 466-2883/2868 for more information.

### Aerobathon

March 12: Come out and experience all that the Hohenfels fitness program has to offer. Back to back 30-40 minute classes starting at 10 a.m. Cardio Kickboxing, Zumba, Spinning, Yoga, Pilates and our new class Body Blast will all be included. There is a \$10 entry fee. Free T-shirt for the first 20 participants to register.

For more information or to register, stop by the post gym or call sports and fitness at DSN 466-2883.

### Kontakt Club events

March 2: Monthly club bowling night at the on-post bowling alley, Lane 17, from 7-9 p.m. Meet us there.

March 6: Club members and friends will attend the annual Velburg Fasching Parade. Watch for more details.

### Conversation Club

Every Wednesday: The German Conversation Club meets at the library every Wednesday from noon to 1 p.m. Bring a sack lunch and practice German language skills.

Call DSN 466-1740 for more information.

## Schweinfurt Briefs

### Askren Clean Sweep

The first Saturday of every month marks another meeting of this surging community initiative. Askren Clean Sweep gathers dedicated volunteers, both Askren residents and otherwise, to meet at the commissary and spend an hour or two sprucing up Schweinfurt's largest housing area. Take pride in your community; join the movement March 5 at 9 a.m.

### SNAPS

This monthly program is a weeklong course designed to integrate spouses into German life and society. Language skills, health care tips, public transport and shopping are just some of the topics discussed. Free child care is available, the program meets daily at 9 a.m. for a week starting March 7. Preregistration is a must. For more, call DSN 354-6933, CIV 09721-96-6933.

### Warrior Zone

Schweinfurt's newest establishment for the Single Soldier is now open on Ledward Barracks, Bldg. 224. It offers a wide array of food and beverages. The facility is open to service members and their guests aged 18 and older. It is the site of monthly open mic nights, video game tournaments, Right Arm nights and much more. For more, stop in for a visit or call DSN 353-8476, CIV 09721-96-8476.

### Single Parent Dinner

Hear ye! Hear ye! Calling all single parents. Join the women from the Protestant Women of the Chapel at the Ledward Chapel on March 10 from 6-8 p.m. for this stress-relieving event to appreciate the hard work you put in. This event is for bona fide single parents (by marriage, not location) aimed at giving single parents a chance to catch their breaths. Food provided for parents and children. Free child care. RSVP in advance by calling DSN 354-2493, CIV 09721-978-2493 or e-mailing Schweinfurt@PWOC.org.

### Budget Management

Learn the basics of financial readiness March 15 from 3:30-4:15 p.m. at the ACS building. The class teaches principles of personal finance, planning and budgeting, banking and checking accounts, using credit wisely and savings and investing. For more information or to register, call DSN 354-6933, CIV 09721-96-6933.





The Top of the Mountain concert bookends the ski season and this alone is well worth the trip. Last year, Grammy winner Alicia Keys closed the season-ending concert. The grand finale this year will feature the American rock band The Killers on Saturday, April 30.

Story and photos by  
**Nathan Van Schaik**  
*USAG Schweinfurt Public Affairs*

ISCHGL, Austria — In Ischgl, Austria, we are all party animals. Fueled by local brew and inspired by mountain-shaking music, table dancing, the thin air and, oh yeah, the best skiing in all of Europe, we pound our chests and howl at the moon. This is the melting pot of cultural elitists, rock music enthusiasts, ski fanatics and other freaks and the epicenter of Europe’s pent-up wintry cabin fever where, during the last weekends of November and April, it all erupts and pours into the streets leaving behind a tumultuous trail along the ski slopes. It is where old school American beer commercials fade into a sort of surreal, mind-numbing reality in the Alps.

Ischgl is a remote ski resort town tucked within Paznaun Valley situated in the Austrian state of Tyrol on the Swiss border, or about a two and a half hour drive southwest of Munich. The ski season runs from December through April but it is on the last weekend that you’ll want to visit. If not to relish the last opportunity to ski for the year then at least to absorb what Europeans can teach us about letting it all hang loose.

The Top of the Mountain concerts bookend the ski season and these shows alone are well worth the trip. Last year Alicia Keys closed the April concert while previous years have included Rihanna, Kylie Minogue, Katy Perry,

Pink, Elton John and even the enigmatic Bob Dylan. The Killers, the American rock band hailing from Las Vegas, headline this year’s spring concert on Saturday April 30. To kick off the 2010-2011 season, Beth Ditto and her indie rock band Gossip rocked a crowd of 20,000 in November.

If you go to the concert, don’t worry about purchasing tickets. There’s only one way to get to the stage at the summit of the mountain at Idalp: by using one of the resort’s heated, high-speed lifts, which are arguably the best in the galaxy. That means you’ll need to purchase a €75 daily lift ticket. Stay for the weekend, opt for multiday

“Ischgl isn’t the place to bring your grandma.”

ski passes costing only a few more euros and get in some time on the slopes.

Don’t worry about booking in advance. You can get these passes upon arrival. Ski in the morning and rendezvous with friends at the concert grounds by early afternoon. The music starts at 1 p.m.

The skiing is certainly what has put this village of only 1,500 inhabitants on the map. Certain circles of Europe’s veteran skiers dub Ischgl as a B-rate resort relative to some of Austria’s other primo locales like Soelden, St. Anton or Kitzbuehel, but that’s pure snobbery.

Ischgl is awesome, plain and simple. With generally reliable snow conditions all

the way up through April, London’s “The Independent” ranked it among the top 25 ski resorts in the world, albeit “awash with fur coats and Gucci shades,” not to mention many “Germans in ski boots dancing on tables to techno music.”

The skiing area in Ischgl is known as the Silvretta Arena. It boasts 140 miles of slopes with 41 cable cars and lifts offering a transport capacity of 83,100 passengers per hour. If skiing is what you’re after, go early.

“One good thing about Ischgl being Party Central (is that) most people are too hung over for an early start,” according to travel writer Roger Alton in “The Guardian.”

The highest point, the Palinkopf, tops out at 9,500 feet, providing a mile-long slope while the “Boarders Paradise” boasts a barrage of half-pipes and obstacles for the adrenaline junkie.

Additionally, there is a ski school and a beginner’s area for novices. A word of warning about the skiing: Skiing habits for any region typically reflect the country’s driving habits. There are many Germans on the slopes. Enough said.

Ischgl isn’t the place to bring your grandma. In addition to the full range of extreme sports you can enjoy there, flirting practically counts as one of the trend sports, according to the city’s website. The nightlife is phenomenal if you’re under the age of 30, or else act like it.

Fire and Ice is one of the hippest bars and at Trofana

Arena you might even spot a recognizable Hollywood face. If low key is what you’re after, check out the Golden Eagle Pub for pints of English ale and classic rock jams.

Hotels and bed and breakfast joints fill up fast so book early. Try to keep it close to Silvretta Strasse. This is the town’s nerve center and accommodations along this street are within walking distance to the lifts headed for the concert. Keep yourself oriented in town by knowing where the three giant main cable cars are located departing Ischgl westbound across the river and up the mountains. If you can find a hotel near any of these three, you’re golden.

A resort town solely dependent on its tourism demands a state of the art, user-friendly website. Ischgl’s delivers on all levels. The site, [ischgl.com](http://ischgl.com), offers everything you’ll need to know in English. Interactive maps, hotel finders, updated weather and ski conditions, rental information and even live webcams will help you plan your whole trip from the comfort of your own home.

If you plan to ride the train into Ischgl, you’ll have to travel to the Landeck-Zams station in Tyrol. From there, take bus line 4240 into Ischgl, which takes about an hour.

Drivers will need an international driver’s license and valid motorway toll sticker known as an Autobahn vignette. You can purchase the stickers at almost at any gas station in Germany or Austria for €9. Affix it to the inside of your windshield or risk a heavy pay-on-the-spot fine from the grumpy, take-no-guff Austrian police.



Ischgl, a remote ski resort town tucked within Paznaun Valley situated in the Austrian state of Tyrol on the Swiss border. The ski season runs from December through April but it is on the last weekend that you’ll want to visit — if not to relish the last opportunity to ski for the year, then at least to absorb what Europeans throughout the region can teach us about letting it all hang loose.



The crowd gathers for the Top of the Mountain concert in Ischgl. The area boasts some of the best skiing in Europe and the season runs through April. In addition to winter sports, Ischgl offers many other activities to celebrate the end of the cold season.



# Condoms can help prevent STDs

Free condoms are available at all health clinics in Bavaria

by Jennifer Walsh Cary  
BMEDDAC Public Affairs

VILSECK, Germany — Chlamydia, gonorrhea, herpes and human papilloma virus, or HPV. All four are sexually transmitted diseases that have a steady presence in the Bavarian footprint. Not to be forgotten, syphilis and human immunodeficiency virus, or HIV, are also making an appearance.

“One of the most prevalent STDs is chlamydia because individuals can have it and not show any symptoms until there are complications later,” said Maj. Rena Trumbull, Grafenwoehr Health Clinic public health nurse. “The next common STD is gonorrhea.”

With STDs plaguing the dating scene like landmines on the battlefield, Trumbull said it's time for people to start making smart choices instead.

“STDs are opportunistic,” she said. “Unprotected sex, even skin-to-skin contact depending on what type of STD it is ... anyone can be exposed if they don't practice safer sex procedures.”

One means of protection — and arguably the easiest — is to use condoms.

“We offer free condoms. You can go to our pharmacy and get

## Know the symptoms

Although some STDs like chlamydia do not show symptoms, others do. If you exhibit any of the following symptoms, contact your local public health nurse or health care provider to have it checked out.

### Men and Women:

Sores, bumps or blisters near your sex organs, rectum or mouth.  
Burning and pain when you urinate or have a bowel movement.  
Need to urinate often.  
Itching around your sex organs.  
A swelling or redness in your throat.  
Flu-like feelings with fever, chills and aches.  
Swelling in your groin.

### Men:

A drip or discharge from your penis.

### Women:

An unusual discharge or smell from your vagina.  
Pain in your pelvic area.  
Burning or itching around your vagina.  
Bleeding from your vagina that is not your regular period.  
Pain deep inside your vagina when you have sex.



them,” Trumbull said. “Not having the money to buy them is not a good excuse since they're available for free at all of our clinics.”

In addition to condoms, she said one of the best means of protection is to know your partner.

“Talk to your partner. Before you start having unprotected sex, both parties should get tested and treated if needed,” Trumbull said. “Explain to your partner that it's important because you don't want to harm your partner and you know they don't want to harm

you.”

As for those singles who are out to have a good time, she said to keep a few things in mind. For example, alcohol can play a huge role in leading to unprotected sex, which may lead to an STD. Also, the red light district is not as controlled as you may think.

“I know people think because prostitution is legal in Germany that the prostitutes must get tested,” Trumbull said. “But that's not the case.”

In the event someone thinks

they may have an STD, they should get it checked by a health care provider as soon as possible.

“They shouldn't ignore it because untreated STDs can cause a host of complications to the body,” she said. “If you ignore it, you're in for a whole lot of hurt later down the road.”

She said it's also worth mentioning that some STDs are not curable and even more of a reason to use protection.

“Bacterial infections like chlamydia, gonorrhea and syphilis can be treated with antibiotics and cured,” Trumbull said. “But viruses like HIV are not curable. We can treat the symptoms or complications, but we can't cure it.”

Everything that is shared with Trumbull, or any other public health nurse in Bavaria, is confidential.

“Nothing goes back to your parents or the command. My job is not to start UCMJ actions because of fraternization,” she said. “My job is to prevent and stop the spread of disease.”

Overall, Trumbull knows the topic of STDs can be a sensitive one, but said it's important to get the message out.

“The main message to people is that STDs are preventable,” she said. “Educate yourself. Know your partner. And use protection until you're finally in that mutually monogamous relationship.”



by Lt. Col. Stephen Linck

BMEDDAC

Want your health-related question answered? Send an e-mail to brmc-pao@amedd.army.mil or post your question on our Facebook page at www.facebook.com/bmed-dac. Your question may appear in the next edition of the Bavarian News.

**Q:** I've heard a lot of people talking about teenagers abusing DXM. Could you tell me what exactly this is?



Respectfully,  
Baffled in Bamberg

**A:** Dear Baffled, Dextromethorphan is commonly referred to as DXM — because Linck

it is easier to say than the real word — and is one of the medicines in over-the-counter cold medications. Dextromethorphan is an ingredient that is used in common cold and flu remedies that when used in recommended dosages is a cough suppressant.

Teenagers abuse this medication because it supposedly makes them high or hallucinate. The amount of drug required to get these effects is what is dangerous. Like any mind-altering drug, getting high can lead to bad decisions.

If you notice someone drinking bottles of cough syrup or taking packages of flu capsules encourage them to get help.

**Q:** I've had a cold for at least two weeks now. Sore throat, stuffy nose, the works. Does this mean I have a bacterial infection and should get antibiotics? Or do I have a virus that just won't quit?

V/r,  
Sick in Schweinfurt

**A:** Dear Sick, It is really difficult to diagnose over e-mail, but you may have different things going on. You may very well have started out with a common cold and developed a secondary bacterial infection. If you didn't get the flu vaccine, you may have the flu which can last for weeks.

We also had a few minutes of sunshine here in Bavaria. It is quite possible that you are suffering from seasonal allergies. Your local health care provider can help determine the cause of your symptoms.

**Q:** Should you workout if your muscles are sore?

Thanks,  
Achy in Ansbach

**A:** Dear Achy, Sore muscles are a good thing. When you work muscles to the point they are sore it means you have worked them hard enough to break them down. Breaking them down causes more muscle to grow. This process over time builds even bigger, stronger muscles.

The human body is amazing because it is the only machine I know of that gets stronger the harder you work it. This soreness is caused by the build up of lactic acid within the muscle, which is a normal part of anaerobic metabolism.

To answer your question, you should not work the same set of muscles every day. There are a lot of different schools of thought on the right answer. Most fitness experts I talk to say you should work each muscle group once a week. My recommendation is not to work sore muscles because this means they are healing. Would you run on a broken ankle? Keeping hydrated is the best thing I have found to help the soreness go away.

If you need a shot of advice, e-mail your question to Lt. Col. Stephen Linck at brmc-pao@amedd.army.mil.

# Be INvolved, INvested and INformed

BDENTAC announces Patient Safety Awareness Week from March 6-12

by Ralinda Eatherington  
Bavaria Dental Activity

The week of March 6-12 has been designated as Patient Safety Awareness Week around the world. The theme this year is “Are you INvolved, INvested and INformed? Commit to Safe Health Care.”

During Patient Safety Awareness Week, the Bavaria DENTAC will host multiple activities in the clinics that will focus on helping our staff help you become better informed about your dental care. We will work harder to ask the questions that will get you to ask questions and access the answers you need to make informed decisions. We want you to become more involved. More importantly, we need you to be an active member of the oral health team. When it comes to your oral health and the oral health of your family you should be at the center of everything that we do. We want you to understand your treatment options.



We will help you invest in your health care by giving you information that can help you find legitimate sources of information when you are not in the dental clinic. At this time in our culture so much information is readily available online — we'll assist you in finding the sites that are trustworthy and will help you to help us care for your needs.

Web links are listed below for you, which will help you find great information to increase your knowledge about health care, oral health care and patient safety.

- American Dental Association: www.ada.org

- Agency for Health Care Quality and Research: www.ahrq.gov
- ECRI Institute: www.ecri.org

We'd like to help you to help us, yourself and your family members. The suggestions below can help you become Informed, Involved and Invested in your health care.

- Talk with your dental care team about anything that's bothering you.
- Make sure you understand what has been said by telling your doc what you believe you heard in your own words.
- Don't hesitate to ask questions.
- Know what medicines you take, why you take them, how to take them and make sure your dentist knows what you are taking (this includes medicine you buy in the Commissary or PX including herbal supplements or energy drinks).
- Know how to contact your dentist or the dentist on call if you have problems after treatment or during nonduty hours.
- Know your clinic advocate.

We are committed to safe health care delivery. We're IN! Are you?

# Rose Barracks travel health clinic worth the trip

by Jennifer Walsh Cary  
BMEDDAC Public Affairs

VILSECK, Germany — Before you pack your bags for an exotic trip to Africa, Asia or South America, make an appointment at the new travel health clinic on Rose Barracks. It could save you from a week of traveler's diarrhea or something more serious, like malaria.

“Many of the tropical diseases you may encounter while traveling abroad are preventable with the proper guidance, medication and vaccinations on board,” said Dr. (Maj.) Joseph Woodring, Bavaria Medical Department Activity Preventive Medicine Chief.

Service members and families can schedule an appointment at the travel health clinic for Mondays and Thursdays after 1 p.m. The travel health clinic will offer: advice on how to avoid diseases, medications to prevent disease transmission, an opportunity to

update vaccinations and tips on what to bring for certain destinations, such as an emergency travel kit or mosquito netting.

“A provider can look at their vaccinations, look at their proposed travel plans and prescribe

**Many of the tropical diseases you may encounter while traveling abroad are preventable with the proper guidance, medication and vaccinations on board.**

Dr. (Maj.) Joseph Woodring  
BMEDDAC Preventive Medicine Chief

medication, vaccines and travel advice specifically tailored to their travel plans,” Woodring said. “This could be for sailing down the Nile or a three-month mission, say, in Uganda or Pakistan.”

He recommends people contact the travel health clinic as soon as they book their trip because some preventive steps will take

time to implement.

“Some vaccines may need to be ordered ahead of time and you may require a few doses to provide the best protection,” Woodring said. “Also, for something like anti-malarials, you want to start the medication before leaving. This is to see one, if you tolerate the medication without side effects and two, so if a malarious mosquito bites you, you've enough medication in your system to be protected.”

People considered high-risk for malaria are the ones who are “visiting friends and relatives” in malaria-endemic regions. According to Woodring, your protection against malaria after leaving a malaria-endemic country greatly decreases after only six to eight months.

“When you return to visit your friends and family, you are effectively malaria-naïve,” he said. “And your sensitivity to apply DEET and take anti-malarial medications is not as great as say a couple going on a trip to a game

reserve in Kenya who is more likely to ‘religiously’ take their prescribed medications for malaria.”

However, most people will face the all too-common problem of traveler's diarrhea.

“If you are spending thousands of dollars to go on a trip, bringing some carefully chosen antibiotics can prevent you from worshipping the porcelain goddess for days,” Woodring said. “It can also cut down your symptoms over 24 hours, which means a lot when you have a tight timeline of events and you may have to miss some because you are sick.”

For an enjoyable vacation, Woodring recommends investing the time up front.

“Do yourself and your families a favor,” he said. “Book an appointment with a provider who can walk you through the greatest risks you may encounter.”

Face-to-face and video teleconference appointments are available for beneficiaries throughout Bavaria. For appointments, e-mail Woodring at joseph.woodring@amedd.army.mil.



# Reconciling utility bills saves in the long run

by **Jess Hofberger**  
*JMTC Office of the Staff Judge Advocate*

An annual reconciliation of your German utility bills will help avoid a nasty surprise when it comes time to move. If you live in private rental housing you must make yourself aware of how your utilities are getting billed and paid. “Utilities” include cold water, sewage, trash, chimney sweeping, heating fuel, insurance and electricity. Get a copy of your lease and read through it. You can probably scratch some of those items off the list of things you need to pay for yourself because they are being paid by your landlord. But you will likely have some utilities that you need to pay every month.

In Germany, unlike in the United States, utility companies only read the meter once per year. Then they simply take the bill for a whole year, and divide by 12 to calculate an “estimated” monthly bill. Since each bill will be the same, they don’t send it every month, you are expected to just pay it.

Most of us will set up automatic withdrawal systems from a local bank account to cover these bills. At the end of the year, or whenever you move, you and the utility company square-up through a process called “reconciliation.” You send the utility companies the readings from your meters, they calculate how much electricity, oil or water you used and how much it cost, subtract your monthly payments and send you a bill for the rest.



The monthly “estimated amount” you pay every month is determined by the usage of the occupant before you or the amount for the period of your last reconciliation. That can make your first year in a new house a little scary.

**Setting the baseline**  
Consider this example: let’s say that a very frugal single person lived in your house before you. His electricity cost about €50 a month. After you move in, if you don’t tell the utility company that you are a family of six, you are going to get a monthly bill for the same €50 a month your predecessor paid. Then, when you reconcile you will get a “surprise” bill for all the “extra” electricity you used. If your family of six used twice as much electricity as the single person, you might owe €50 X 12 months = €600. Ouch!

If you have never conducted a reconciliation, you can request one from the utility company. Remember, many utility companies don’t send over a “meter reader” to figure out how much of the utility you have used. Instead, they mail a card to your German address and ask you to read the meter your-

self and mail it back in. If you don’t return that card, the utility company will send the same bill month after month until you do the reconciliation or move — at which time the housing office does a final meter reading and obtains the final bill. This final bill will measure all the electricity (or other utility) you’ve ever used at that location since the last reconciliation. If we go back to our example family and imagine that they never reconciled their electrical bill for an entire three-year tour, we can see that in order to “clear housing” they will need to pay the electric company for €600 worth of extra electricity per year, for three years — that’s €1,800!

However, only a little effort will spare you this rude reconciliation surprise. If you have lived in a private rental for more than a year and not received annual reconciliations for all the utilities which you pay yourself - you should contact housing and ask them to help you request the necessary forms from the utility companies.

Then be sure to do a reconciliation every year and you’ll never end up owing more than a few euros.

**Advance preparation**  
The most important thing Soldiers and family members can do to prepare for their annual reconciliations is to set aside €80-100 each month so that they will be prepared to reconcile their bill each year.

The second most important thing they can do, according to the Housing Office, is to save any bills that come to their German

mailboxes. If you need assistance understanding the bill, stop by your local housing office and ask to have the bill read to you. The bills look the same each month, so you won’t need a translator very often. The third thing you can do is to be energy wise. Utilities are expensive in Germany and turning down the heat and using low wattage light bulbs can result in real savings.

## Critical first year

It is important to reconcile each of your bills, every year, but especially the first year. Once you have an accurate usage for your particular family, your estimated monthly bills will be very close to what you actually owe. You will not need to set as much to cover shortfalls. This is especially important for families in homes where filling oil tanks on a semiannual or annual basis is required. If you don’t know if you are responsible for filling your oil tank, check your lease or call housing!

To end on a happy note, let me point out that it works the other way, too. If you use less of a utility than estimated, the utility company pays you back. Also, everybody should be able to conserve enough heat, electricity and water to actually make money from the €604 monthly allowance paid to most Soldiers for home utilities.

Finally, if you have any questions regarding your bills or if you have been living in a private rental for more than a year without reconciling your utilities, assemble your bills and contact your local housing office for assistance.



## Important details for savings on utilities

Did you know that your local utility companies (Eon and Stadtwerk Weiden) are partnering with MWR to provided you the customer (private rental residents only) the opportunity for reimbursement for previous bills and cost savings on future monthly utility bills?

You can sign up for the program as a new private rental resident or as a current resident.

If you enter into the program prior to receiving your end of the year bill, you may be eligible for substantial reimbursement.

For example, if you moved into private rental quarters January 2010, processed paperwork through MWR in June 2010, you may be eligible for reimbursement for that entire period depending on when your yearly bill cycle ends. See you local VAT office for more specifics.

Upon establishing a rental contract and establishing an estimate of what your monthly payment to the utility companies should be, you can process

paperwork with your local VAT office to save the 19 percent tax normally associated with any purchases made in Germany. The housing office will assist you in determining what that monthly estimate should be based on past resident history.

However, you might have to take some things into consideration. You must have an account with either Community Bank or Service Credit Union from which the utility companies can debit against on a monthly basis, and a copy of your monthly bill or your end of year bill.

You will also need to make a onetime payment of \$77 by check or cash.

This simple process could initially put hundreds of euro back into pocket, and ultimately provide almost 20 percent saving on a monthly basis. Do the math.

*Editor’s Note: Information provided by Robert B. Massey, chief of U.S. Army Garrison Grafenwoehr’s Housing Division.*

# New tax law grants spouses residency protections

The final article in a four-part series on tips for preparing taxes for the 2010 tax season in Bavaria

by **Denver Makle**  
*JMTC Public Affairs*

GRAFENWOEHR, Germany — When service members reside in a state because of their military duties they are often exempt from paying state taxes there, unless that state is also the Soldier’s state of permanent residence or domicile. The Civil Relief Act (SCRA) is the law that guarantees the Soldier’s protection. In 2009 President Obama extended those protections to the spouses of service members, and signed a new law, the Military Spouses Residency Relief Act (MSRRA).

Permanent residence and domicile are interchangeable legal terms referring to the place where a person has their permanent home, and where they have the intention to return.

“A person’s domicile is es-

“Established by physical presence in the state with the simultaneous intent of making it a permanent home,” said Brad Huestis, chief of Client Services Division at the 7th Army Joint Multinational Training Command’s Office of the Staff Judge Advocate. “Generally, a person must reside in the new state at the time they form the intent to make it their permanent home.”

Huestis said while the MSRRA extends a valuable protection to military spouses, it does not allow a spouse to pick another state of residence just for tax purposes.

“First, the physical presence and intent tests must be met,” he said. “Then, to retain a domicile spouses must share the domicile of the service member spouse.”

It is not uncommon for Soldiers to keep their home of record throughout their military

“**Before a spouse attempts to change their state of residency ... they should first contact the State Taxation Board for advice.**”

Tracy Cooklin  
JMTC Tax Preparer, Main Post

service, despite the frequent relocations to many duty stations. Similarly, some Soldiers do elect to change their state of legal residence to one, which is different from their home of record, said Huestis. However, a Soldier must meet the physical presence and intent to remain and return tests to do so.

Under the MSRRA, the same is now true for military spouses. For example, if a Soldier assigned to Fort Hood, Texas, marries, and the spouse

lives in and establishes domicile in Texas, then both may retain Texas domicile when they later PCS to Virginia. Neither would be subject to Virginia’s state income tax, while there on military orders. Likewise, if the couple met and married in Virginia, the military Texan would be exempt from Virginia state income tax under the SCRA, but the spouse would not be able to use the MSRRA to avoid Virginia state tax because the physical presence

and intent tests were not met.

“Each state has different tax regulations and filing requirements,” said Tracy Cooklin, a tax preparer at the Main Post tax center. “Before a spouse attempts to change their state of residency for tax purposes, they should first contact the State Taxation Board for advice.”

Tax preparers will be available to assist filers with any tax questions, said Cooklin.

“Filling out a DD Form 2058, ‘State of Legal Residence Certificate’ by itself will not legally change a service member’s state of legal residence,” said Cooklin. “The form is only used by DFAS to determine state income tax withholding for military pay.”

Cooklin said military members and their spouses who establish new domicile in states without an income tax, such as Alaska, Florida, Nevada,

South Dakota, Texas, Washington and Wyoming should document and be prepared to show proof of ties to their new state, and of cutting ties to their old state.

Some good examples of proof of physical presence and intent to remain include: registering to vote, voting and continuing to vote via absentee ballot, ownership of land and maintaining a valid driver’s license.

The centers offer free federal and state income tax preparation and e-filing. When the tax centers are not open, always contact your local legal assistance office with questions about establishing or maintaining state domicile.

*Editor’s Note: Tracy Cooklin and Brad Huestis, chief of Client Services Division at the JMTC Office of the Staff Judge Advocate, contributed reporting.*

## Tax Centers in Bavaria

**Ansbach/Katterbach**  
Katterbach Kaserne  
Bldg. 5817, 3rd floor  
DSN 467-2324  
CIV 09802-83-2324  
Mon-Fri, 9 a.m.-5 p.m.  
Thu, until 7 p.m.  
walk-ins and scheduled appointments

**Ansbach/Illesheim**  
Stork Barracks  
Bldg. 6506 (Law Center)

DSN 467-4511  
CIV 09841-83-4511  
Mon-Fri, 9 a.m.-5 p.m.  
walk-ins and appointments

**Bamberg**  
Warner Barracks,  
Bldg. 7000, 4th floor  
DSN 469-8261/8262  
CIV 0951-300-8261/8262  
Mon-Fri, 9 a.m.-noon,  
1-4 p.m. walk-ins and  
scheduled appointments

**Garmisch**  
Artillery Kaserne, Bldg. 203  
DSN 440-3516  
CIV 088217-50-3516  
Mon-Fri, 8 a.m.-noon,  
by appointment only

**Grafenwoehr**  
Main Post, Bldg. 216  
DSN 475-9258  
CIV 09641-83-9258  
Tue through Fri,  
9 a.m.-5 p.m.,

Mon, 10 a.m.-6 p.m.  
walk-ins and appointments

**Hohenfels**  
Bldg. 313  
DSN 466-2836  
CIV 09472-83-2836  
Mon, Wed and Fri,  
9 a.m.-4 p.m.  
Tue and Thu,  
10 a.m.-5 p.m.,  
1st Sat of month

9 a.m.-noon  
by appointment only

**Schweinfurt**  
Conn Barracks, Bldg. 1  
DSN 353-8286  
CIV 09721-96-8286  
Mon-Fri, 9 a.m.-5 p.m.  
walk-ins and  
scheduled appointments

**Vilseck**  
Rose Barracks  
Bldg. 245, 1st floor  
DSN 476-2714  
CIV 09662-83-2714  
Mon-Fri, 9 a.m.-noon,  
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scheduled appointments



# 1-91st shaping the future of Soldier fitness



Retired Navy SEAL and TRX trainer Ken Taylor monitors in the background while Pfc. Derrick Bales, left, and Pfc. Kyle Chubbey, right, break a sweat while using their TRX strap.

Story and photo by  
**Nathan Van Schaik**  
*USAG Schweinfurt*  
*Public Affairs*

SCHWEINFURT, Germany — The bionic American Soldier of the future will be more aerobically and anaerobically fit to meet the demands of combat — that is, if Soldiers stationed here have anything to do with it.

Charlie Troop from the 1st Squadron, 91st Cavalry Regiment, stationed in Schweinfurt kick-started a new pilot fitness program, at Finney Gym that could revolutionize the training protocol associated with Soldier fitness.

Drawing from the insights of NCAA Division I college football fitness and coupled

with conditioning that employs functional movements, the Mission Essential Fitness program aims to build the modern-day Soldier into a “tactical athlete,” according to its developer, Doug Briggs, Fort Bliss Director of Human Performance.

U.S. Army Europe and Installation Management Command Europe teamed up to conduct the MEF pilot program which will run through June 1 in Schweinfurt.

On day one, Soldiers recorded vital information that will be tracked to monitor the overall success of the program. Things like blood pressure, body fat index, scores on fitness and agility tests, as well as their susceptibility to injury over the course of the coming

months will all be scrutinized by a team of experts.

Afterward, they laced up their sneakers, donned PT gear and readied for instruction. Enter Ken Taylor, a retired Navy SEAL, fitness guru and the brain trust behind one of the pillars of the MEF program, simply known around fitness circles as TRX.

“TRX is training redefined,” said Taylor. “It’s mission-specific, functional training that can be done anywhere so the Soldier can increase operational capability.”

Otherwise known as suspension training, TRX utilizes a strap suspended from an anchor point. Athletes use the strap to perform grueling exercises in a variety of positions. For a Soldier on the go,

the one pound easily accessible strap can be jimmied to a door, a make-shift wall or a tank. It makes the gym obsolete. Taylor spent hours teaching troopers in the art of atomic push-ups, single-leg squats, planks and other high-octane TRX exercises.

When asked why his troop was chosen over the hundreds of others to participate in the MEF training, Staff Sgt. Jeremy Pine, the team leader for the 1-91st C Troop, said it was because of their experiences in the most rigorous terrains during their deployment to Afghanistan last year.

“If we can help the Army create a more combat-ready program, this will help Soldiers get fit for deployment,” Pine said.

## GEICO honors Soldier

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effort into our training mission, but also into our community to make it a better place to live for us and our families,” said Wells.

Wells said he is especially honored to be recognized by a civilian firm.

“A lot of outside companies don’t really look at the military, they don’t really understand what we do here,” he said. “They say they support the military but you really don’t see it, especially here in Europe.”

Now in its 23<sup>rd</sup> year, The GEICO Military Service Awards Program selects one member from each military service branch as well as one member from the reserve/national guard to recognize for contributions made in the areas of drug and alcohol abuse prevention, fire safety and fire prevention, and traffic safety and accident prevention. Nominees are judged on how their career (on duty) or noncareer (off-duty) related activities contribute to their community and the extent these activities serve to inspire other military or civilian personnel.

As the community’s DARE (Drug Abuse Resistance Education) representative, Wells is at the elementary school most days giving classes on the dangers of drug and alcohol abuse.

“I try to get to the school as much as I can,” Wells said. “Early education is really important. If we make them aware of what drugs and alcohol and other harmful chemicals can do to their system at a young age, then they are less likely to do it when they get older. They understand the effects of it now, before it’s too late.”

Beginning with kindergartners, Wells said he works up to a full 10-week program for fifth- and sixth-graders. In addition, he volunteers at the school’s outreach programs, like the Kinderfest and ice cream socials, by setting up a DARE booth and talking to children and their parents.

“It’s important to get it (drug and alcohol abuse information) out to the parents as well, so they understand what their kids are doing,” he said.

In addition to his work for DARE, Wells’ nomination cited his many hours devoted to traffic section, ensuring that all traffic cases and citations were handled in a timely manner. Wells also logged significant volunteer hours with the Outdoor Recreation Program, providing route recon for the new ATV course, and he has been instrumental in the development of a new indoor paintball facility.

In addition to a plaque and a \$2,500 cash honorarium, GEICO will provide roundtrip transportation and lodging for Wells and his wife Luann in Washington, D.C., to attend the presentation ceremony.

“Luann was extremely excited and proud of me,” Wells said. “We have been married for almost nine years now and she is the true hero in this. She has stood by me and pushed me this whole time. Many times I have missed out on birthday parties and wedding anniversaries but she understands that my mission is just as important when I am home as when I am deployed.”

## Culinary team puts the peas in preparation



Photo by Sgt. Joel Salgado

GRAFENWOEHR, Germany — Staff Sgt. Isilee Dozier, right, a cook with U.S. Army Europe’s 7th Theater Tactical Signal Brigade, and Pfc. Lakisha Green, a cook with U.S. Army Europe’s 16th Sustainment Brigade, strain a pea puree during preparation for a lunch served by the Installation Management Command-Europe / USAREUR Culinary Arts Team, here, Feb. 9. The team was preparing meals and refining its menu before departing to compete at the 2011 U.S. Army Culinary Arts Competition, Feb. 25–March 12, at Fort Lee, Va.

## American Gunnerz round out the team

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well as of the media. Ludwig goes as far as comparing his finesse with the Dallas Mavericks’ Jason Terry.

“Anthony is, of course our high scorer,” Ludwig explained. Bynum regularly racks up more than 20 points. “He’s very skilled, plays incredibly fast and clever. It might not always be by the book, but it’s a joy to watch him.”

Asked about his achievements and the growing attention of the local press towards his performance, Bynum modestly states that his teammates are crucial for his success.

Thomas is another asset. Being able to train and play with DJK Schweinfurt helps Thomas to stay in shape and to keep up his dream to play top-level basketball in a professional environment.

“Basketball means a lot to me,” said Thomas with a smile. “I played growing up already and it was the reason I joined the Army. I played in the All-Army team

and the All-Armed Forces team in 2004, 2008 and 2009.”

“Brett is very tall with a tremendous vertical leap and he’s very strong,” Ludwig said of Thomas. “He knows a lot about the game. You can tell he’s an experienced player and he’s also the one that always seems to have the most fun on the court.”

Also playing since his childhood days, Grandison brings great experience and manifold skills to the court. Even though a professional basketball career was never his primary goal, Ludwig knows that Grandison’s wisdom and attitude makes him a cornerstone of the team.

“Jermaine is a very smart player,” Ludwig said. “He has an excellent jump shot even from a distance. His calmness helps the rest of the team to stay focused even under pressure and he’s just an awesome player to have, for the team as well as for the coach.”

The appreciation is mutual and Gran-

dison values the exceptional opportunity he’s been given.

“Being from the States, it’s not too often that you get to experience the European way of playing basketball,” Grandison explained with excitement. “It’s totally different and it’s good to learn about it. I have a lot of fun doing it and the relationships that we build with the rest of the team are great.”

Combined with long traveling distances for the games, the participation in the German team comes out to be the most time-intensive, but efforts are made on both sides. Communication within the team was switched to English and the American players are actively integrated with the German players.

“It really doesn’t matter if they are German or American,” stressed Ludwig. “We are all one team. And when they’re on the court there’s no difference. They aren’t Germans or Americans, they are all Schweinfurters.”

## ACS adds generalists

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Under the new design, ACS will transition a number of personnel into generalist positions focused on helping Soldiers and family members navigate services. Generalists will provide an array of baseline services, while specialists will still be available for the more complex and extended services.

“The goal is to make sure Soldiers, their families and civilians can find the right service, at the right time, the first time they seek assistance,” said Paulette Freese, chief, Policy and Operations Branch, Soldier Family Readiness Division. ACS will also introduce an upgraded tracking system that allows staff to follow up with clients more efficiently and to ensure client

needs are met when service is provided.

“If a client requires more in-depth assistance, we want to make sure there is a smooth transition to the next service provider,” Freese said. “We will maintain contact with the Soldier or family member until their needs have been met.”

Soldier and family members will start to see ACS services in new satellite locations as well, such as at units and garrison exchanges and commissaries.

Twenty-two installations have been selected as pilot sites to assess the new service delivery design that runs until March 31. The pilot phase will provide insight and best practices prior to the Armywide rollout in April.

## Survey data used to determine Soldiers’ utility allowances

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different from renters upon whom this program is based. For example, a homeowner may decide to make an investment in his dwelling to improve the residence’s insulation, thus decreasing heating costs. Additionally, renters who split their rent with another person should not take this survey.

**Why is the survey important?**

Every year DTMO conducts a

survey to identify how much service members spent during the previous year for utilities. The data from this survey is used to determine utility allowances, which are part of the Overseas Housing Allowance (OHA). Rental data is not part of this survey.

OHA is a cost reimbursement based allowance. Members on active duty who are entitled to basic pay are authorized OHA based on the member’s grade, dependency status and

permanent duty station location unless otherwise specified. The OHA Utility/Recurring Maintenance Survey allows utility expenses to be considered when the utility allowance is updated.

**Who can take the survey?**

The survey is intended for all military personnel who reside in off-post privately leased housing. Members may take the survey at home with their spouses. Spouses are authorized

to take the survey if the member is deployed or unavailable.

**How do I take the survey?**

Service members taking the survey report the average monthly cost of utilities and routine maintenance from the past year. To complete the OHA utilities expense survey, service members should have actual bills for their utilities and maintenance expenses available. They will be expected to compute a monthly average

for each of these expenses.

**How can I help the process?**

Leaders and HR professionals are encouraged to spread the word to all eligible service members. The key to success and ensuring that Soldiers are properly compensated, is a high participation rate and good data.

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